

Title

Historical SKetch of the First Christian Church  
of Burlington, prepared 1890.



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HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF  
BURLINGTON, prepared 1894.

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## THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH DEDICATED

With Imposing Ceremonies Before a Large and Interested Audience.

A synopsis of the dedicatory sermon preached by Rev. W. W. Staley of Suffolk, Va. -- The building illustrated with those prominent in its history--visiting ministers--a full program of the exercises--historical sketch, etc.,etc.

For more than a month past the Christian congregation at this place has been busily making preparations for the last day of 1893, or the fifth Sunday in December--it being the time set for the dedication of their handsome new church edifice on Davis street. The day was damp, though not a bad day by any means, and every nook and corner of the church was filled with chairs, and every one we saw was comfortable seated. Outside of the pastor and preacher of the day we noted the following visiting and resident ministers on the rostrum about the pulpit: Revs A. F. Iseley, J. W. Holt, W. G. Clements, J. W. Wellons, P. H. Flemming, W. S. Long, D. D., and W. T. Herndon of the Christian church, and Rev. M. M. McFarland of the Methodist church. The following was the order of exercises as carried out to perfection:

Voluntary--Long Metre Doxology to the tune of "Old Hundred."

Prayer--by Rev A. F. Iseley.

Hymn 690--read by Rev P. H. Flemming, and sung to the tune of "St. Thomas."

History of the Congregation--by Rev J. W. Holt.

1st Scripture Lesson--read from the Psalms, by Rev W. G. Clements.

Prayer--by Rev J. W. Wellons.

2nd Scripture Lesson--read by Dr W. S. Long from the 5th chapter of the Ephesians.

Hymn 704--read by Rev W. T. Herndon and sung to the tune of "Monoah."

Rev C. C. Peel, the pastor, then rose and in a few timely remarks thanked all who contributed to the erection of the house, and introduced Dr. W. W. Staley, who after some pointed introductory remarks on the doctrine, name and usages of the church, proceeded to his sermon. The text was taken from the prophesy of Haggai 2nd chapter and 7th verse: "And I will shake all nations and the desire of all nations shall come, and will fill this house with glory." The prophet had reference to the second temple and the coming of Christ. The preacher divided his discourse into three heads.

I. The Majesty of Divine Presence.

II. Christ the Glory of the Church.

III. Christ the Head of the Church.

The sermon was well prepared and the speaker occupied only thirty-five minutes in its delivery, at the close of which the congregation stood up and Dr. Staley read the dedicatory service in an earnest and impressive manner, the people responding with an Amen! at the close. The Doxology was then sung and the benediction pronounced by Dr. Long.

Miss Nena Turrentine presided at the organ, assisted by Prof. Arthur Davis with his cornet and a large choir of well trained voices. The music was inspiring.

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Voluntary--Long Metre Doxology to the tune of "Old Hundred."  
Prayer--by Rev. A. F. Isaley.  
Hymn 600--read by Rev. P. H. Flemming, and sung to the tune of "At Thomas."  
History of the congregation--by Rev. J. W. Holt.  
Last scripture lesson--read from the Psalms, by Rev. W. G. Clements.  
Prayer--by Rev. J. W. Wellons.  
Last scripture lesson--read by Dr. W. S. Long from the 5th chapter of the Ephesians.  
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- I. The Majesty of Divine Presence.
- II. The Glorious Glory of the Church.
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## ILLUSTRATIONS

By the assistance of the congregation the News is enabled today to illustrate the new building, give portraits of the organizer of the congregation, the pastor who died at his post, and the present pastor. For much that we are indebted to other minds and hearts, and for a description of the building we refer you to the following

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

The work of the Christians in this vicinity began more than fifty years ago. Within a radius of two miles, forty years ago, the leading families of the community were representatives of the Christian church at New Providence near Graham. Prominent among the heads of these families were Mason Tarply, William Tarply, Henry Tarply, Abram Tarply, William Holt, John Holt, Milton Holt, John S. Turrentine, Thomas Sellars, Daniel Albright, Thos. Truitt, Sallie Whidbee. The descendants of these families are among Burlington's most worthy citizens today, and constitute in part the Burlington Christian church. The history of these ancestors would form a readable story, and yet how few among us even know their names.

The location of the work-shops of the North Carolina Railroad Company at this place gave rise to a village which took the name of Company's Shops, afterwards changed to Burlington. For a number of years the only place of worship was what is known as the Union church. Here the pastor of New Providence church and other Christian ministers preached, sometimes regularly and sometimes occasionally, for the convenience of the Christians living in and around the village. But no attempt was made at organization, for, strange as it may seem, the influence of the leading members of the Christian church in and around the place, was rather against such a step, claiming that it would tend to weaken New Providence. During all these years the Christians, in numbers and influence, exceeded any other denomination in the town, and some among them foresaw the importance of having a church organization here, but the movement was postponed from year to year in deference to the sentiment already mentioned. Meanwhile several denominations had organized and established churches of their own. In most of the revivals conducted in the Union church the Christians and their ministers took an active part.

In January, 1884, Rev. James R. Jones of the Friends' church conducted a meeting which continued three weeks. Rev. D. F. Jones and J. W. Holt of the Christian church assisted in this meeting. Quite a number of persons were converted, among whom were several children of Christian families. This brought the question of organization and the establishment of a church home before the Christians for serious consideration, and the conclusion reached, was that we must go forward at once.

On the night of February 16th, 1884, after preaching, Rev. J. W. Holt organized a Christian church with eighteen members. The new organization at once elected him pastor, which position he filled until November, 1886. During his connection with the church the membership increased to thirty. Rev. J. U. Newman became pastor in November 1886, and served until November 1888. Rev. W. T. Walker became the next pastor and served until November, 1890. Rev. R. A. Ricks became pastor in November, 1890, and served most efficiently until his death in the pulpit of the Methodist church in

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Burlington in the fourth Sunday mornign in April, 1891. Without the slightest premonition the little flock was bereft of its beloved pastor, and the fond hopes of the little church, in a moment seemed doomed to fall to the ground but a noble purpose once firmly fixed in the heart is not easily relinquished and and for days the church in resolved that although their leader had fallen the plans agreed upon should be carried out.

At a business meeting of the church held December 15th, 1890, a committee was appointed to "look out locations for a new church." Also, a committee (was appointed) to submit designs and specifications as to the kind of building that should be erected.

February the 9th, 1891, the question of location was settled in favor of the lot on which the church has since been built.

During the first week in December, 1889, a Church Aid Society was organized by Rev. J. W. Holt, composed of thirteen lady members of the church. This Society now has thirty-one active and eight honorary members. Besides sending thirty-five dollars to foreign missions, donating twenty dollars to other purposes, and \$46.89 incident expenses, this Society has aided in completing and furnishing the new church to the extent of \$361.60; total amount raised by the Society, \$463.49. It is but justice to say that without this assistance the work could not have been done, and the church ready for dedication free from debt at this time.

In June, 1891, Rev. C. C. Peel became pastor, which position he still holds. Under his ministry the work has progressed until the membership numbers one hundred and three, and the new and handsome church has been completed at a cost of four thousand dollars.

#### THE NEW CHURCH

In style the new church is of the latest and most improved arrangements. The walls are built of brick to the height of sixteen feet above the floor. The pitch of the main auditorium is twenty-three feet, and its length is sixty feet with a width of forty-four feet. This can be increased by opening two class rooms, each ten by twenty-seven feet, making a maximum width of sixty-four feet. There is also a class room at the end, ten by twenty-one feet, fifteen feet pitch, and a recess for the pulpit of the same dimensions, making the maximum length eighty feet. The steeple is one hundred and four feet in height. The drawings for the building were made by Benjamin D. Price, Architect, of Philadelphia.

With such a comfortable house in which to meet for the worship of God, it is to be hoped that unity of purpose and concert of action as well as peace and harmony may ever characterize the congregation that shall meet within it to worship the God of love.

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